UEA Priorities for the 2020 Utah Legislative Session

Education Funding

- The UEA proposes a long-term funding focus on four major areas: 1) Individualized Student Attention; 2) Address the Teacher Shortage; 3) Student Equity; and 4) Student Health and Safety. Full implementation of these goals will require a sustained funding effort over many years.

TO BEGIN THIS EFFORT, the UEA recommends the 2020 Legislature:
  - Fully fund student enrollment growth, including all impacted line items (est. $50 million)
  - Provide a 6% increase on the WPU, prioritizing WPU before more restricted distribution methods (such as TSSA) to allow LEAs maximum flexibility (est. $208 million)
  - Implement investments recommended in the Envision Utah: A Vision for Teacher Excellence task force report (as adopted by the Governor's Education Excellence Commission):
    - Increase salaries for all teachers ($500-600 million)
    - Strengthen teacher induction programs ($32.5 million)
    - Provide more scholarships for up-and-coming teachers ($45 million)

- Devise and implement a tax system that will deliver sustainable and growing long-term revenue to address the chronic underfunding of public education.

- Safeguard and expand long-term revenue available for public education such as provided by the Utah constitutional guarantee directing income tax to education.

- Oppose schemes to funnel public education money to personal student accounts or privately-run entities where taxpayer accountability is lost.

Quality Instruction and Student Equity

- Ensure each classroom has an effective teacher by funding strategies to identify and address the root causes of Utah's critical teacher shortage.

- Invest in programs that develop a pipeline of educators to the teaching profession, especially in rural areas or hard-to-staff subjects and schools.

- Improve teacher retention through comprehensive educator induction and mentoring programs.

- Ensure every student's unique learning needs are met by providing the resources to succeed.

- Increase resources for student social and emotional well-being such as school psychologists, social workers and counselors, restorative justice, and trauma-informed teaching practices.

- Create incentives to diversify the teacher workforce to reflect Utah’s changing demographics.

- Invest in educator salaries to attract the best and the brightest to remain in the teaching profession.

- Reduce class sizes to allow teachers the time needed to reach and inspire individual students.

- Maintain high standards for teacher licensure to ensure that every student has a teacher who is prepared and qualified to teach on day one.

Education Policy

- Strengthen accountability standards for charter and online schools consistent with neighborhood schools, including student performance, governance, educator evaluation and financial accountability.

- Eliminate the misuse of student test scores to grade schools and impose consequences on schools.

- Ease the overwhelming workload heaped on Utah teachers by reducing the number of education bills and limiting the number of mandated initiatives.

- Support direct, non-partisan election of school board members.

January 7, 2020